

Family Deployment Supplement to the Connecticut Guardian

VOL. 4 NO. 7

HARTFORD, CT

JULY 2003

'If the war is over, why isn't my daddy home?'

Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton
State Senior PANCO

"Anybody feels better when they have a certain amount of control over a situation, and that includes children," said Dr. Daniel J. Affrunti, PhD, Director of Child Development at Connecticut Children's Medical Center in Hartford.

"In times of war, we don't have that control over who returns and when. It falls to the parents of our children to do something with the children that makes them feel like they do have a certain amount of control," said Affrunti.

He recommended writing letters and drawing pictures for younger children, and volunteering around the house or with organizations such as the Guard's Family Support Groups for the older children.

"It makes them feel like they have control over a part of the situation. Help them to feel they are doing their share."

But those statements were made during the height of the battles in Iraq, when the fire fights and airstrikes were part of the daily television viewing habits of millions of Americans. Now that the president has declared the major hostilities over, how do we talk to our children about what is still a war? How do we answer the question, "If the war is over, why isn't my daddy home?"

"For young children, direct, unambiguous, black/white responses are the ones that will be best understood and be most reassuring," said Affrunti. "I would agree with them that the war is over - after all that is what they hear and see from the media.

"I would also add that now since the war is over, it's time for clean-up or helping the Iraqi people clean-up after the war to make sure that everybody has running water, electricity and to keep them safe from robbers until they have their own police

force."

Affrunti also suggested using analogies that young children would understand, such as doing laundry.

He said you could explain that when we wash clothes, we put them in the washer, then in the dryer. The clothes have been washed, but there is still work to be done. The clothes still have to be folded and put away.

For older children, such as

preteens and teens who are more likely to be aware of the continuing dangers overseas, Affrunti said not to emphasize what they already know. He suggested discussing with these children that the clean-up process is a necessary and responsible thing to do.



Children are easily confused when they hear that war is "over," and at the same time hear about soldiers being hurt and killed overseas, especially true when it's their loved one who has not yet come home, or who has deployed after the official declaration that formal hostilities are over.
(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton, State Sr. PANCO)

"Explain to them that the protection of the Iraqi people from marauders who would take the opportunity to plunder their own country is a noble and right thing to do," said Affrunti.

If a child should ask why soldiers and airmen are still being killed overseas even though the war is over, Affrunti suggests that you tell the children that there are still some bad people, such as robbers, who pose a danger to the Iraqi people

as well as our own soldiers and airmen who are acting as the police.

"It is important to distinguish between war risk vs. post-war risk," said Affrunti. "The number of casualties is lower overall than during the war. Thus, it is important to emphasize that all the soldiers are safer now,

and the chance of getting hurt is much smaller than when the war was going on."

Affrunti said that while the political reality is that anti-American sentiment and pro-Saddam forces still exist which place our soldiers in harm's way, children will not grasp this readily and anything that is unclear or conceptually difficult will likely only result in more anxiety for the child.

With so many of our troops in areas of Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan being unable to give their families exact locations for their own safety as well as that of operational security, there has been a lack of communications via telephone, email or postal mail from some areas. This can also lead to anxiety in children when they hear of an injured or killed soldier and they haven't heard from their loved one in a while. How do you reassure a child that their family member is ok in a situation like this?

"Again, handle all questions matter of fact," suggested Affrunti. "Remember your manner in explaining these questions should not betray any anxiety that you might feel.

"Next, explain that during war things like telephone lines, TV stations and post offices get damaged. They don't work very well right now. That's one reason why mommy or daddy is staying to help fix those things so they work right and fast. Letters will take more time to get home, and the loved one might not be able to call as much because with only a few working phone lines and so many soldiers, everyone has to wait their turn. Under no circumstances with young children, indicate that hazards or dangers are the reason for the communications lapse, even if this may be one valid reason," warned Affrunti.

Air Control families comfort each other with food and friendship

MAJ. GEORGE H. WORRALL III
103RD FIGHTER WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

On the cool and rainy Friday evening of Memorial Day weekend at the Old Stone Church in East Haven about 100 family members came to meet each other and talk about their deployed loved ones.

The dreariness outside contrasted sharply with the warm food and feelings inside as family members from the 103rd Air Control Squadron shared conversation and favorite food dishes from home with the families of deployed military members.

"It's a great opportunity for the family to see that there is support not only within their family unit but from the whole air control squadron," said Maj. Tanial D. Lowe, plans officer, 103rd Air Control Squadron, who is serving as the home station detachment commander while the unit is deployed.

Although the theme of the evening was a potluck dinner, the real draw was to meet the other families.

"I think it is great to have this event and meet other people going through the same thing," said Rhonda Taft spouse of Staff Sgt. David Taft. "You don't realize it (the feelings) as much until you see other families."

During the evening the families were also able to record a video message to their loved ones on a tape that was mailed overseas.

"I really wanted to get the video out to him since the girls (5 months and 10-years-old) have grown so much," said Annalisa Breisler whose husband Capt. John Breisler is deployed. "He went early with two others

so he is missing out on what our older daughter is going through in school and the growth of the baby, where a lot happens in two months."

To facilitate discussion, parents, spouses and children broke into separate groups after dinner, to talk about what was on their minds and what they had in common while the younger children made crafts. Meeting the families of the people her son serves with answered another question for at least one mother.

"Now I know why my son does not mind going to the National Guard; because these are great people," said Louise Ramadei, whose son Tech. Sgt. John Ramadei is deployed and also shared with his mother he built a barbecue pit at the deployed location. "This event was beautiful and very supportive for the family members. A lot different from when my brothers served in World War II and Korea."

For a unit member left behind, it was a chance to put faces with the families she speaks with on the phone.

"I transfer the morale calls," said Senior Airman Christine L. Mihalik, information management, 103rd Air Control Squadron. "And I took a break tonight to meet

everyone we connect to with the calls."

The event was hosted at the First Congregational Church's Old Stone Church in East Haven. According to Rev. Karen Johnson it was Louise and Maj. (Ret.) Kevin Ward, faithful parishioners that were eager to extend the church's hospitality to help the 103rd Air Control Squadron host the event.

"We hope to open this (the church recreation room) to the community even more," she said.

With the Orange Air Control Facility in various stages of demolition and rebuilding, it is safe to say the evening would not have been possible without the support of the church, as well as the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts Louise Ward organized to help the Family Support Group make the evening happen.



Family members help themselves to food at the 103rd Air Control Squadron Pot Luck dinner May 30. (Photo by Maj. George Worrall, 103 FW/PA)



Senior Master Sgt. Charles Solomon (left seated in white shirt) leads a discussion with spouses during the breakout session at the 103rd Air Control Squadron Pot Luck dinner May 30. (Photo by Maj. George Worrall, 103 FW/PA)

Handyperson Hotline established for families and volunteers

Calling all soldiers and airmen, retirees or spouses. This is your opportunity to stop being a spectator and start doing something to help the Connecticut Army and Air National Guard during these unprecedented times.

Volunteer to donate some of your time and expertise to the CTNG Family Program's Handyperson Center. If you are a tradesman or an all around handyperson or a laborer, the Handyperson Center is looking for you!

E-mail your name, phone number skill, status (active, retired, spouse) and hometown to Sgt. Maj. Toby Cormier at toby.cormier@ct.ngb.army.mil or call (860) 209-0770.

The Handyperson Hotline is designed to reduce the stressors on the families of deployed soldiers and airmen by having everyday household problems diagnosed and repaired or referred to competent businesses at no cost for labor.

The program is also designed to get seasonal chores such as window air conditioners installed/removed, pools opened/closed, leaves removed, items brought to the dump and so on.

All of this can be performed by fellow Guardsmen, retirees or spouses of Guardsmen who are willing to donate their time and expertise to this program.

Here's how the program works:

A deployed family member calls the Handyperson Hotline with a clogged drain.

The Hotline manager contacts a plumber from the Handyperson Database who will contact the family member and attempt to walk the person through correcting the problem (if possible.)

If not corrected, the Hotline will dispatch a qualified person (fellow Guardsman) to the house to correct the problem.

The program is not designed to get planned projects like installing a deck, finishing off a basement, painting or roofing the house.

It is designed to give the deployed family somewhere to turn to keep the home operating smoothly without having to pay to get things done around the house that were normally done by the deployed soldier or airman.

To volunteer or for more information, call (860) 209-0770 today.

Doctor offers advice on talking to children about war

From Page S1

With many Welcome Home ceremonies taking place and receiving the attention of the mass media, many children can become confused and even angered that some children have their parents home, while their's is still overseas, or even just deploying as part of the clean-up and peace-keeping process.

Many Connecticut soldiers and airmen are now monitoring the skies, repairing and maintaining aircraft and ground vehicles, providing order and helping to rebuild the infrastructure. Still others have recently deployed within the United States as part of Operation Noble Eagle III, a homeland security mission.

"While we know there is a different level of danger, we don't focus on that fact with the children," said Affrunti. "Rather, we try to equate the two. That is, both groups of soldiers are helping out to protect people, in one case us, and in the other, the Iraqi people. Those who are deployed for stateside service, well, their families are lucky, but for our kids' sake, let's focus on what they do, not on the level of risk. This

is a tricky concept for kids as they tend to either think mortal danger or none at all."

According to Affrunti, once again, spin is important.

"The key idea is to focus upon the fact that the returning soldiers went over, came back and celebrated," said Affrunti. "That means to the child, that their loved one will also come back."

Affrunti said the child will begin to think about what kind of special celebration can be held for his mommy or daddy when they come back.

"This type of positive approach focuses the child's attention upon the positive aspect of the situation - the soldiers come back home - and, in addition, makes them proactive by doing something for their parent when - not if - they return," said Affrunti. "By choosing to focus and giving the child something to do for the absent parent, you reduce the anxiety and reinforce the notion that they are coming home."

Affrunti also offered suggestions on what to look for in children of various ages that might be signals they are having difficulty dealing with the situation.

"For children, the most common symptom of increased stress involves sleeping - difficulty getting ready for bed, falling asleep or staying asleep (i.e. wakened by nightmares)," said Affrunti. "Oftentimes children will show regression, wanting to sleep with their parent because they are scared."

"Another possible symptom is school phobia, where the child becomes fearful about going to school, but is symptom-free when at home."

According to Affrunti, school phobia usually involves intense complaints regarding vague symptoms of headaches, stomachaches and such. Some children may even become fearful of being out of the home at all.

Being separated from a parent can become an all-consuming fear for some children. One parent is gone already, what's to stop the other parent from leaving if the child is not there to stop him or her from leaving, too?

Other children can become "hysterical" over relatively small frustrations, said Affrunti.

A general rule is that if symptoms persist

for more than two weeks, professional assistance should be sought.

Symptoms for teens are likely to be different than in younger children.

Increased physiological symptoms of anxiety such as increased heart rate, sweating and dizziness, or cognitive symptoms such as difficulty concentrating, making decisions and decreased productivity are likely.

Teens may worry more about the things they typically worry about - friends, school and parents.

"They may have repetitive thoughts that they can't stop," said Affrunti. "They may develop rituals to protect themselves against such things as germs, getting sick and contamination. The effects of such worry are usually evident to parents in decreased effectiveness in the classroom and decreased satisfying contact with friends."

The bottom line, according to Affrunti is to know your children, and answer their questions honestly and in an age-appropriate manner.

Connecticut National Guard
Office of Family Programs
"Summer Youth Camp"
555 Willard Avenue, Building 2W
Newington, CT 06111
860-878-6723

June 15, 2003

Dear Guard Family Member,

The Family Program Office is pleased to release the applications for our 9th Annual "Summer Youth Camp." This year's Camp will be held from Sunday, August 10th through Saturday, August 16th at Camp Bowland.

This year has been an especially difficult one for our Guard family. As you all know, the major deployments both in and out of the United States, have caused major changes in our family structures. Our children, especially, have suffered in their own unique way. Therefore, we found it especially important to continue with the operation of our Camp, with the hope that we will provide a positive Guard experience for each of our attendees.

Our Camp will once again offer a wide variety of social programs, field trips and team building exercises for our children and staff. The tuition, \$175 per child, will cover all of your child's expenses - field trip admissions, food, lodging and activities - with the exception of spending money on any of our field trips. We believe that our rate provides an affordable option for our children, and hope that you will agree.

We recognize that the applications are being released much later than usual, and we offer our apologies for that. Please submit your child's application as soon as possible, but not later than Monday, July 7th. Your application may be returned via email to kim.jefferson@nsg.org, mailed to Family Program Summer Youth Camp, 555 Willard Avenue, Bldg. 2W, Newington, CT 06111 or faxed to 860-878-6723.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us. Our office numbers are 860-878-2677 or 860-878-6723.

Thank you for your patience. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Connecticut National Guard Family Program
Summer Youth Camp

9th ANNUAL CTNG FAMILY PROGRAM SUMMER YOUTH CAMP APPLICATION

Applicant Information

Applicant's Name: _____

This application is for a (please circle only one) ☐ Campy (Ages 10-13) or ☐ Counselor (Age 14 and up)

Applicant's Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: (____) _____ Applicant's Email Address: _____

Applicant's Date of Birth: _____ Applicant's Age: _____

Grade in September: _____ Name of School: _____

Team: _____

Sponsor Information

Parent/Legal Guardian's Name: _____

Parent/Legal Guardian's Address (Please note that all camp documents will be sent to the sponsor/parent/legal guardian's address and not to the Camp Applicant's should the addresses be different)

The sponsor is a member of which of the following (please circle all that apply):

Army National Guard ☐ Air National Guard ☐ Civilian Employee of the Connecticut National Guard ☐
State Military Department Employee ☐ Office of Emergency Management Employee ☐
First Company Governor's Post Guard ☐ Second Company Governor's Post Guard ☐
First Company Governor's Home Guard ☐ Second Company Governor's Home Guard ☐

Has camper ever attended an overnight program? YES or NO

Can camper swim without life preserver? YES or NO

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian: _____

Completed application to:
Soldier - Airmen Support Center
CTNG Family Program
555 Willard Avenue, Bldg. 2W
Newington, CT 06111

Family Assistance Center locations

Family Assistance Centers are set-up in the following armories around the state:

Bristol Armory, 61 Center Street, Bristol, CT 06010
(860) 582-1206 Toll Free 866-347-2283 1st Lt. Lynda Hedenberg

Waterbury Armory, 64 Field Street, Waterbury, CT 06702
(203) 574-2406 Toll Free 866-347-2291 Sgt. Jonathon Duffy

Manchester Armory, 330 Main Street, Manchester, CT 06040
(860) 646-0780 Toll Free 866-347-2286 Sgt. 1st Class Dwight Frederick

Windsor Locks, AASF, Bradley International ARPT-BLDG 85-152, Route 75, Windsor Locks, CT 06096
(860) 627-7942 Toll Free 866-347-2292 1st Lt. Heidi Young

Groton - AVCRAD, 71 Tower Avenue, Groton, CT 06340
(860) 448-3346 Toll Free 866-347-3346 Sgt. 1st Class Kelly Ives

103rd FW, Bradley ANG Base, Bldg 8, East Granby, CT 06026
(860) 292-2730 Mrs. Donna Rivera

Newington SASC, 555 Willard Avenue, Building 2W, Newington, CT 06111
(860) 878-6723 (860) 878-6724 Toll Free 800-858-2677
Mrs. Kim Hoffman, Spec. Jessica McKenna and Staff Sgt. Christopher McCarty

Family Assistance Centers that still need staffing:

Branford Armory, 87 Montowese Street, Branford, CT 06405 (203) 481-3874 Toll Free 866-347-3351
Stratford Armory, 63 Amory Road, Stratford, CT 06614 (203) 375-8269 Toll Free 866-347-3356
Middletown Armory, 200 Main Street, Middletown, CT 06457 (860) 344-9201 Toll Free 866-347-3355
Norwich Armory, 38 Stott Avenue, Norwich, CT 06360 (860) 887-3911 Toll Free 866-347-3357

Volunteers will be needed in each facility, and those wishing to help out can contact Mrs. Kim Hoffman, Family Program Manager at 1-800-858-2677.

Any family member or loved one of a deployed soldier who has questions about benefits or deployment issues may also get answers to their question at the following email addresses: kim.hoffman@ct.ngb.army.mil or julian.muller@ct.ngb.army.mil

Visit the

Connecticut Guardian

on-line at

www.ct.ngb.army.mil



Contact a Recruiter by email at
recruiter@ctbrad.ang.af.mil
or call toll free 1-800-992-4793



Have an adult help you find the place on the map where you are, and then the place on the map where your family member is and draw a line between the two.

THE WORLD



Kids' Coloring Corner

A MONTHLY FEATURE
OF FUN AND
EDUCATIONAL
ACTIVITIES TO HELP
MILITARY CHILDREN
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